SECRET INVASION™
MARVEL
33
.com
DAVID • STEGMAN • SIBAL • COX
X-FACTOR®
RATED T+
03311
7 59606 05878 5
ZONESDIVA
$2.99 US $3.05 CAN
DIRECT EDITION
HE LOVES YOU
PART 1 of 3

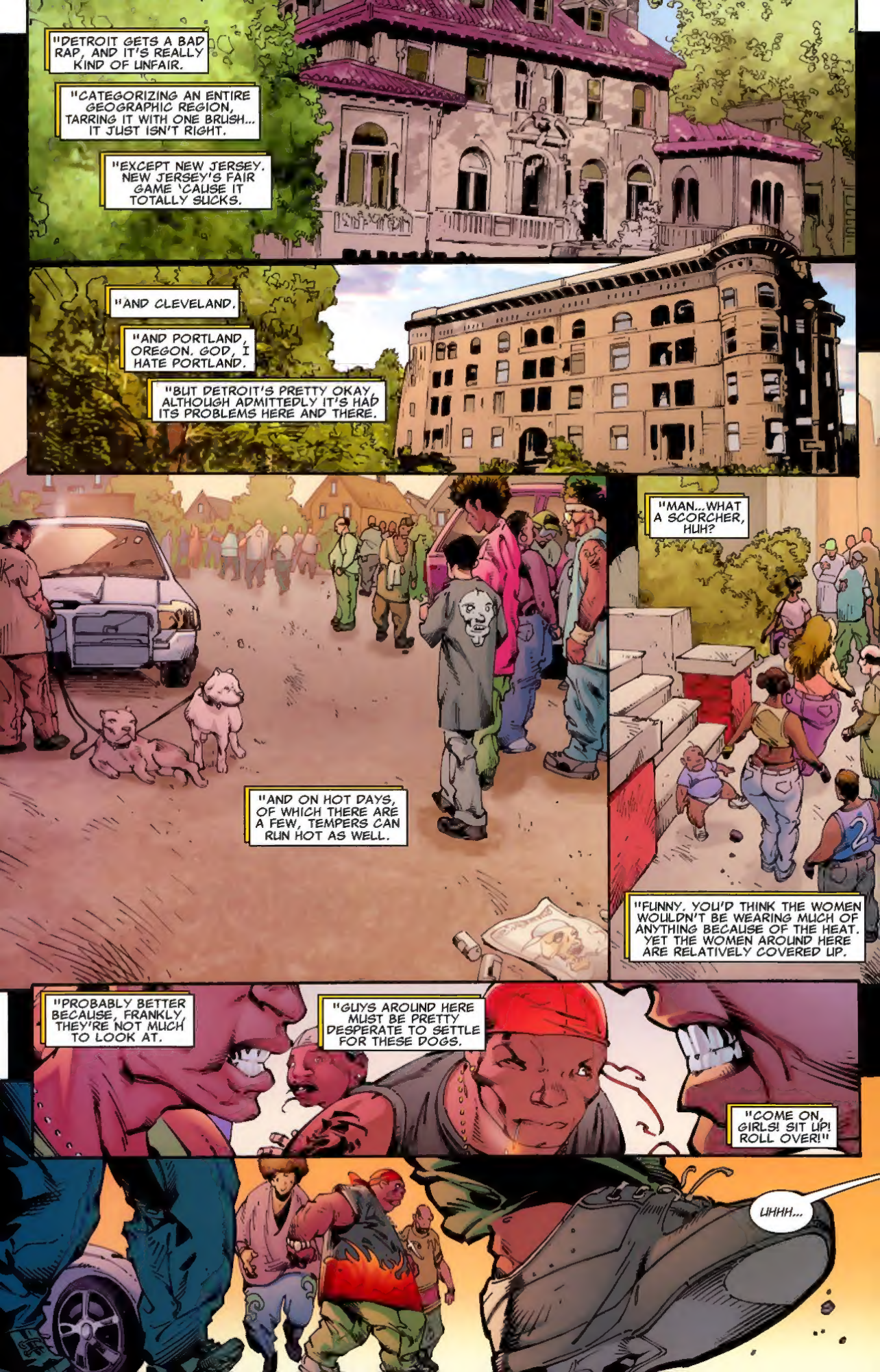
IN A SOCIETY WHERE MUTANTS AND FORMER MUTANTS ALIKE FEEL THREATENED BY THE WORLD AROUND THEM, THEY TURN TO THEIR FIRST, BEST LINE OF DEFENSE WHENEVER TROUBLE ARISES: X-FACTOR, THE PRIVATE DETECTIVE AGENCY FOUNDED BY MADROX, THE MULTIPLE MAN.

X-FACTOR

PREVIOUSLY...

HAVING LEFT MUTANT TOWN BEHIND AS A SMOLDERING WRECK, X-FACTOR HAS RELOCATED TO DETROIT, PROMPTLY LOWERING THE PROPERTY VALUE OF LARRY STROMAN'S HOUSE. CALLING THEMSELVES XF INVESTIGATIONS, THEY HAVE QUICKLY DEVELOPED A REPUTATION FOR BEING THE GO-TO AGENCY FOR CASES THAT ARE SOMEWHAT UNUSUAL. MEANWHILE THE TEAM IS CONVINCED THAT THEY HAVE LEFT THE THREATS OF VAL COOPER AND THE O*N*E BEHIND, UNAWARE THAT VAL KNOWS EXACTLY WHERE THEY ARE AND HAS BEEN INSISTING ON MADROX'S COOPERATION LEST SHE MAKE XF'S LIFE EXTREMELY DIFFICULT.

X-FACTOR (ISSN #1932-5266) **No. 33, September, 2008**. Published Monthly by MARVEL PUBLISHING, INC., a subsidiary of MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT, INC. OFFICE OF PUBLICATION: 417 5th Avenue, New York, NY 10016. **PERIODICALS POSTAGE PAID AT NEW YORK, NY AND AT ADDITIONAL MAILING OFFICES.** © 2008 Marvel Characters, Inc. All rights reserved. All characters featured in this issue and the distinctive names and likenesses thereof, and all related indicia are trademarks of Marvel Characters, Inc. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons, and/or institutions in this magazine with those of any living or dead person or institution is intended, and any such similarity which may exist is purely coincidental. $2.99 per copy in the U.S. and $3.05 in Canada (GST #R127032852) in the direct market and $3.99 per copy in the U.S. and $3.99 in Canada (GST #R127032852) through the newsstand; Canadian Agreement #40668537. **Printed in the USA.** Subscription rate (U.S. dollars) for 12 issues: U.S. $27.00; Canada $37.00; Foreign $39.00. **POSTMASTER: SEND ALL ADDRESS CHANGES TO X-FACTOR, C/O MARVEL SUBSCRIPTION DEPT., P.O. BOX 110, NEWBURGH, NY 12550. TELEPHONE.# (800) 217-9158. FAX # (845) 457-5029. subscriptions@marvelsubs.com.** ALAN FINE, CEO Marvel Toys & Publishing Divisions and CMO of Marvel Characters, Inc.; DAVID GABRIEL, SVP of Publishing Sales & Circulation; DAVID BOGART, SVP of Business Affairs & Talent Management; MICHAEL PASCIULLO, VP Merchandising & Communications; JIM O'KEEFE, VP of Operations & Logistics; DAN CARR, Executive Director of Publishing Technology; JUSTIN F. GABRIE, Director of Editorial Operations; SUSAN GRESPI, Editorial Operations Manager; OMAR OTIEKU, Production Manager; STAN LEE, Chairman Emeritus. For information regarding advertising in Marvel Comics or on Marvel.com, please contact Mitch Dane, Advertising Director, at mdane@marvel.com. For Marvel subscription inquiries, please call 800-217-9158.


"DETROIT GETS A BAD RAP, AND IT'S REALLY KIND OF UNFAIR.
"CATEGORIZING AN ENTIRE GEOGRAPHIC REGION, TARRING IT WITH ONE BRUSH... IT JUST ISN'T RIGHT.
"EXCEPT NEW JERSEY. NEW JERSEY'S FAIR GAME 'CAUSE IT TOTALLY SUCKS.
"AND CLEVELAND.
"AND PORTLAND, OREGON. GOD, I HATE PORTLAND.
"BUT DETROIT'S PRETTY OKAY, ALTHOUGH ADMITTEDLY IT'S HAD ITS PROBLEMS HERE AND THERE.
"AND ON HOT DAYS, OF WHICH THERE ARE A FEW, TEMPERS CAN RUN HOT AS WELL.
"MAN...WHAT A SCORCHER, HUH?
"FUNNY, YOU'D THINK THE WOMEN WOULDN'T BE WEARING MUCH OF ANYTHING BECAUSE OF THE HEAT. YET THE WOMEN AROUND HERE ARE RELATIVELY COVERED UP.
"PROBABLY BETTER BECAUSE, FRANKLY, THEY'RE NOT MUCH TO LOOK AT.
"GUYS AROUND HERE MUST BE PRETTY DESPERATE TO SETTLE FOR THESE DOGS.
"COME ON, GIRLS! SIT UP! ROLL OVER!"
UHHH...

THE DARWIN AWARDS

PETER DAVID — WRITER
LARRY STROMAN — PENCILER
JON SIBAL — INKER
JEROMY COX — COLORIST
VC'S CORY PETIT — LETTERER
WILL PANZO & AUBREY SITTERSON — EDITORS
JOE QUESADA — EDITOR IN CHIEF
DAN BUCKLEY — PUBLISHER

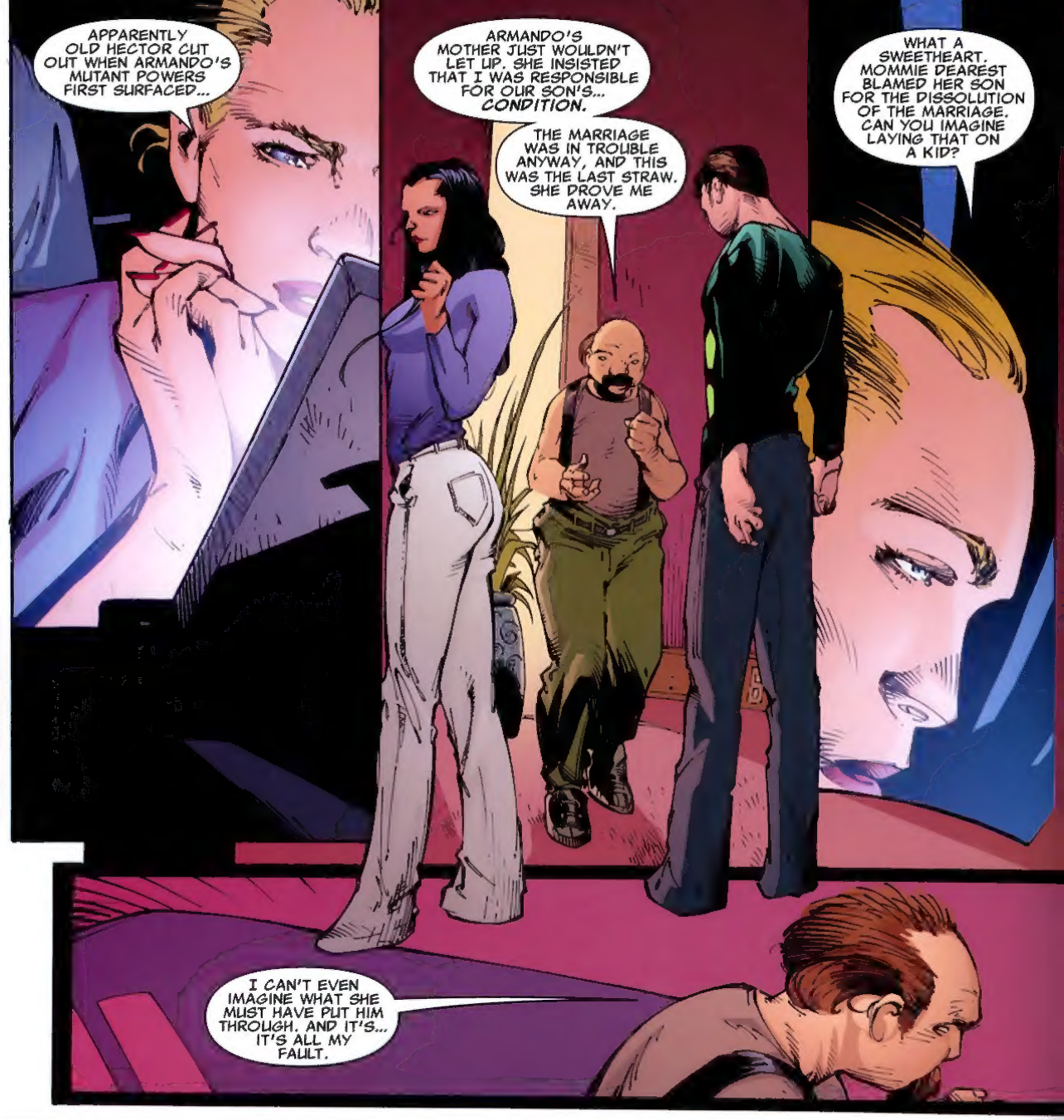
WHY?
BECAUSE MY POWERS HAVE BEEN A BIT HIT OR MISS LATELY, AND I WANT TO SEE WHERE I STAND.
BY TRYING TO GET YOURSELF KILLED?
YOU'RE NOT WORRIED ABOUT YOU GETTING KILLED?
WELL... NO.
NOT EVEN A LITTLE?
UH-OH.
YOU WITH THIS IDIOT?
HOW DO YOU MEAN "WITH" EXACTLY?
DON'T GET CUTE.
I'LL TRY, BUT IT'S NOT ALWAYS UP TO ME.
THIS REALLY ISN'T NECESSARY!
MO

YEAH! IT REALLY IS!
GET HIM, MAN! DO IT!
CUDDLES
WHY AIN'T HE STRUGGLING?
YOU THINK HE DROWNED?!? THAT FAST!
YOU'RE, LIKE, WATERBOARDING HIM, MAN! MEBBE HE PASSED OUT.
CHECK UNDER HIS THROAT. HE MAY HAVE DEVELOPED GILLS.
GILLS?!? WHAT ARE YOU TALKING AB--
WHAT THE HELL--?!
TRY TO DROWN HIM IN ESTROGEN. I BET HE'LL GROW BREASTS.
YOU'RE NOT HELPING, LONGSHOT!
TRUE, BUT IN MY DEFENSE, I WASN'T TRYING TO.
"I'M LOOKING FOR MY SON, AND I HAVE REASON TO BELIEVE HE'S HERE IN DETROIT."

MAY I ASK HOW YOU KNOW THAT, MISTER...?
MUNOZ. HECTOR MUNOZ.
THE FACT IS, MR. MADROX, XF INVESTIGATIONS ISN'T THE FIRST ONE I'VE COME TO. I'VE BEEN SEARCHING FOR ARMANDO FOR MONTHS.
THE LAST REPORT I GOT TRACED HIM TO DETROIT, BUT THAT'S WHERE THE TRAIL WENT COLD.
ALSO, I'VE HEARD THAT XF TENDS TO "SPECIALIZE" IN CERTAIN TYPES OF CASES.
DO TELL.
WHAT, SPECIFICALLY, HAVE YOU HEARD ABOUT US, MR. MUNOZ?
WELL, THAT YOU'RE THE PEOPLE TO COME TO WITH ANYTHING INVOLVING, UHM...
Mutants.
You don't have to whisper. Our office isn't bugged.

WHAT DID SHE JUST SAY?
SHE SAID THEY'RE NOT BUGGED, MS. COOPER.
WELL, YOU HAVE TO LOVE THE IRONY THERE.
"ARMANDO MUNOZ." THAT NAME IS REALLY RINGING A BELL.
MADROX IS STILL TRYING TO PRESS HIM ON HIS PREVIOUS SOURCES OF INFORMATION, BUT MUNOZ IS REMAINING VAGUE.
THAT'S ALWAYS A GOOD SIGN, WHEN A CLIENT ISN'T BEING CANDID RIGHT UP FRONT.
ALSO SAYS HE DOESN'T HAVE ANY RECENT PHOTOS OF HIM.
WELL, MAYBE WE DO.
C'MON, ARRR-MAHN-DO. TELL ME WHY THAT NAME IS SO FAMI--
CRAP. I MUST BE GETTING SENILE. OF COURSE, IT'S--

DARWIN.
DARWIN? ARE YOU SURE?
THE WORDS CAME OUT OF MY MOUTH, MADROX. THEREFORE, BY DEFINITION, I'M SURE.
ONCE THE MUTANT RANKS THINNED TO LESS THAN TWO HUNDRED, I MADE IT A POINT TO KNOW EVERYTHING POSSIBLE ABOUT OUR REMAINING BRETHREN. NAMES WERE THE FIRST ORDER OF BUSINESS.
YEAH? WHAT WAS THE SECOND?
POLITICAL LEANINGS, MR. I-VOTED-FOR-NADER IN 2000.
MY MOM OWES HER LIFE TO SEATBELTS. ANYBODY HERE GOT A PROBLEM WITH THAT?
UH... NO?
WHATEVER.
NOPE.
GOOD BY ME, MAN.


APPARENTLY OLD HECTOR CUT OUT WHEN ARMANDO'S MUTANT POWERS FIRST SURFACED...
ARMANDO'S MOTHER JUST WOULDN'T LET UP. SHE INSISTED THAT I WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR OUR SON'S... CONDITION.
THE MARRIAGE WAS IN TROUBLE ANYWAY, AND THIS WAS THE LAST STRAW. SHE DROVE ME AWAY.
WHAT A SWEETHEART. MOMMIE DEAREST BLAMED HER SON FOR THE DISSOLUTION OF THE MARRIAGE. CAN YOU IMAGINE LAYING THAT ON A KID?
I CAN'T EVEN IMAGINE WHAT SHE MUST HAVE PUT HIM THROUGH. AND IT'S... IT'S ALL MY FAULT.

HMMM. IT APPEARS DADDY WAS HARDLY A SAINT. A COUPLE OF DWIs.
FACT IS...IF I HADN'T BEEN A DAMNED DRUNK, MAYBE WE COULD HAVE HELD THINGS TOGETHER. I DUNNO.
BUT I'M IN RECOVERY NOW, AND I'M TRYING TO PUT MY LIFE BACK TOGETHER...AND FINDING MY SON, DOING RIGHT BY HIM... THAT'S A HUGE PART OF IT.
PLEASE HELP.

SOME HELP PLEASE?
WHAT, YOU CAN'T HANDLE A MERE KNIFE?
SHUT UP, WHITE BREAD! YOU'RE NEXT!
WHY ISN'T HE FIRST? HE STARTED THIS.
JUST YOUR LUCK, I GUESS.
TELL YOU WHAT...I'LL JUST LEAVE A LITTLE MARK SO THAT--
WHAT THE HELL? NOW HIS THROAT'S LIKE RUBBER!
WHAT KIND OF FREAK IS HE?
HOW MANY KINDS ARE THERE? I'M GENUINELY INTERESTED.
HE'S A MUTANT! GOTTA BE! GET H--!
UNFFFF!!!

TIME TO GO.
BUT THIS WAS JUST GETTING INTERESTING.
I'VE HAD ENOUGH INTERESTING EXPERIENCES FOR ONE DAY, LONGSHOT!
HOLY CRAP!
HOW FAST IS THAT GUY!?
AT LEAST THIS GUY'S NOT GOING ANYWHERE!
GET HIM!

FIND HIM!!!
FIND HIM AND HAUL HIS PASTY BUTT BACK HERE!
HUH?
WHERE'D HE GO?!?
HE WAS JUST HERE!
HMMM.

SO EASY TO MANIPULATE THESE POOR CREATURES.
HOW MUCH THEY NEED US TO SHOW THEM THE WAY. TO PROVIDE THE LIGHT FOR THEIR DARKNESS.
TRUE, MANY WILL FALL ALONG THE WAY... BUT WE SKRULLS ARE MERE GARDENERS. YES...GARDENERS, TRIMMING AWAY THE DEAD WOOD, SHAPING THE VAST HEDGES OF HUMANITY INTO A TRUE TOPIARY OF--
CRUNCH
EH?
ZZZZHHHH
ZZZZHHHH
I KNEW IT. I FREAKING KNEW IT.

THAT'S... ARMANDO?
THE MOST RECENT PHOTO WE HAVE IN OUR FILES, YES.
BUT...HIS SKIN...IT'S...IT'S SO PALE.
WELL, HE'S CONSTANTLY EVOLVING IN ORDER TO SURVIVE. SINCE HE'S BEEN LIVING MOSTLY IN CAUCASIAN ENVIRONMENTS, MAYBE HIS BODY FELT THE NEED TO GET WHITER IN ORDER TO BLEND IN.
THERE'S A CHEERFUL COMMENTARY ON SOCIETY.
WHEN EDDIE MURPHY WAS NINETEEN, MANHATTAN CABS WOULDN'T STOP FOR HIM. USED TO BLOW PAST ME, TOO. THAT'S SOCIETY FOR YOU.
DON'T WORRY, MR. MUNOZ. IF ARMANDO IS IN DETROIT, WE'LL FIND HIM.
NOTHING'S GOING TO DISTRACT US.
YOUR KID'S STILL USING MY BLADDER AS A TRAMPOLINE, MADROX. I'M OFF TO PEE. AGAIN.
WHY DOES SIRYN FEEL THE NEED TO ANNOUNCE THESE THINGS?
I THINK SHE'S TRYING TO MAKE ME FEEL GUILTY.
HOWZAT WORKIN' OUT?
PRETTY SUCCESSFUL SO FAR.

ANYWAY, MR. MUNOZ, AS I WAS SAYING, WE'RE ON IT...
I APPRECIATE THAT, MR. MADROX, BUT...
BUT WHAT?
WELL...DETROIT'S A BIG PLACE. AND THAT'S JUST THE CITY ITSELF, NOT COUNTING THE BURBS. I MEAN...
"...ARE YOU SURE YOU'VE GOT THE MANPOWER TO GET IT DONE? NO OFFENSE."
"NONE TAKEN, SIR.
"AND BELIEVE ME, WHEN IT COMES TO MANPOWER...
...WE'VE GOT IT COVERED.

YOU WANT TO TELL ME WHAT THIS IS ABOUT, JAMIE?
WELL, THAT APPEARS TO BE A PICTURE OF DARWIN.
DON'T BE SMART.
CAN'T HELP IT, VAL. IT'S BIGGER THAN BOTH OF US.
FORGET DARWIN. I HAVE AN ASSIGNMENT FOR YOUR AGENCY.
IT'S GOING TO HAVE TO WAIT, BECAUSE WE'RE NOT FORGETTING DARWIN AND WE'RE SHORTSTAFFED.
NO, YOU LOOK, JAMIE. THE ONLY REASON YOUR GROUP HASN'T BEEN PRESS-GANGED INTO THE INITIATIVE OR JUST THROWN INTO PERMANENT HOLDING IS--
WE'RE AMERICANS WITH RIGHTS PROTECTED UNDER THE CONSTITUTION?
YOU CAN PRODUCE AN ARMY SINGLE-HANDEDLY. YOU DON'T GET TO PLAY THE "SHORTSTAFFED" CARD.
LOOK, VAL...
:PBBBTHHH:
WARN ME NEXT TIME YOU'RE GONNA CRACK WISE, OKAY?
SORRY, DUDE.
"RIGHTS," JEEZ. WHAT AN IMAGINATION.

I'M NOT SCREWING AROUND HERE, JAMIE.
NEITHER AM I, VAL.
YOU WANT TO HAUL US IN? TRY AND DO IT.
MAYBE YOU'LL SUCCEED, OR MAYBE WE'LL JUST DISAPPEAR AGAIN AND START OVER ELSEWHERE.
OR MAYBE...
...MAYBE YOU SHOULD THINK ABOUT JUST BACKING THE HELL OFF.
WE'VE BEEN PRETTY GOOD ABOUT TAKING CARE OF THE CASES YOU'VE COME TO ME ABOUT. BUT YOU'VE GOT TO CUT US SOME SLACK ON THE STREET-LEVEL BUSINESS WE ACQUIRE.
OH, I'VE "GOT TO", HUH. TELL ME, MADRÓX: HOW DO YOU THINK THE REST OF YOUR CREW WOULD FEEL KNOWING THAT YOUR INDEPENDENCE IS JUST AN ILLUSION?
THAT THE O*N*E HAS YOU IN ITS BACK POCKET?
...
YOU WANT TO TELL THEM? OR SHOULD I?
THAT'S WHAT I THOUGHT.
TWENTY-FOUR HOURS, MADROX, TO WRAP UP THIS DARWIN BUSINESS. AND THEN I WANT YOUR HEAD SQUARELY IN OUR GAME...
...OR I TAKE IT OFF AT THE NECK.
DON'T WORRY, BOSS. YOU'LL THINK OF A WITTY COMEBACK AFTER SHE LEAVES, LIKE ALWAYS.
THANKS.

WHEW...
MISS ME?
ACCK--!
YOU IDIOT!
COME ON, 'MANDO. YOU ACT LIKE YOU'VE NEVER BEEN IN A FIGHT BEFORE.
OF COURSE I HAVE! BUT IT'S ONE THING TO LAND IN A FIGHT AND ANOTHER TO PROVOKE IT!
YOU KNOW WHAT? THIS IS RIDICULOUS. YOU SAID YOU COULD BRING ME TO PROFESSOR XAVIER.
AND I CAN! I WILL!
WHEN?
I DON'T KNOW. THAT'S NOT HOW MY POWER WORKS.
I'M NOT A TRACKER, 'MANDO. I JUST SET MY MIND ON WHAT I NEED TO HAVE HAPPEN, AND COUNT ON LUCK AND RANDOM CHANCE TO GUIDE ME.
I DON'T KNOW THAT WE CAN KEEP COUNTING ON THAT. XAVIER IS MISSING. HE COULD BE ANYWHERE.
I WANT TO HELP HIM.
AND I WANT TO HELP YOU HELP HIM! YOU JUST HAVE TO TRUST M--

WHAT'S WRONG?
'MANDO...?
I THINK THAT GIRL'S FOLLOWING US. I SAW HER BACK IN THE OTHER NEIGHBORHOOD.
GIRL? WHAT GIRL?
KLY'BN'S LOINS! HER!
YOU KNOW HER? WHO IS SHE? AND WHO'S "KLYBIN"?

LONGSHOT!
HE SPOTTED ME!
HE SPOTTED YOU? NICE STEALTH WORK.
NOT NOW, JENNIFER! WE'RE HEADING DUE WEST! CUT HIM OFF!
SON OF A--!
HOLD IT! WHAT'S GOING ON!? WHO ARE--
NOT NOW.
OOOF!!!!

FOR SOME REASON, I THOUGHT THAT RELOCATING TO DETROIT WOULD GIVE US A FEW CALMER MOMENTS. THAT NO LONGER BEING IN MUTANT TOWN WOULD RESULT IN--ON OCCASION--A CHANCE TO CATCH MY BREATH.
FUNNY HOW THINGS NEVER WORK OUT THE WAY YOU EXPECT.
THIS IS MADROX, GO AHEAD, THERESA.
ONE OF YOUR DUPES CALLED IN.
TURNED UP A POSITIVE SIGHTING OF DARWIN. HE WAS TRAVELING WITH A GUY WHO--FROM THE DESCRIPTION--COULD BE LONGSHOT, WHO APPARENTLY STARTED A RIOT NEAR THE CASS CORRIDOR.
SOUNDS LIKE LONGSHOT, ALL RIGHT.
THEY TOOK OFF HEADING IN THE DIRECTION OF MIDTOWN.
TELL MONET TO--
--TRY TO SPOT THEM FROM THE AIR? ALREADY ON IT.
EXCELLENT. I'LL HAVE ALL DUPES IN THE AREA CONVERGE. GOOD JOB, THERESA.
YOU'LL HAVE THE DUPES CONVERGE? HOW YA GONNA DO THAT?
I'LL LET THEM KNOW.
HOW? BY THINKIN' HARD?
PRETTY MUCH.
YOU CAN DO THAT?
GUIDO...
YOU'D BE AMAZED WHAT I CAN DO.

HOLD IT!!!
I SAID HOLD IT!
HOW DARE YOU!! HOW DARE YOU ADDRESS ME IN SUCH A MANNER!
HAVE YOU NO LOYALTY AT ALL?
FWOOSH
YES! JUST NOT TO YOU!!
NOW SURRENDER BEFORE I--

STOP IT! HE MAY BE AN IDIOT, BUT HE'S MY FRIEND--!
NO, HE'S NOT.
DON'T MAKE ME KILL YOU.
UNFFFF!!!
I DOUBT YOU COULD EVEN IF YOU TRIED.
YOU MAY BE ABLE TO SLAP HIM AROUND SOMEWHAT, BUT KILL HIM? UNLIKELY. BOY'S A BORN SURVIVOR.
MONET!!! YOU'RE MONET!
I HAVE YOUR VANITY FAIR SPREAD!
LET'S DO THE AUTOGRAPH THING LATER, OKAY, EVO-BOY?
LET GO, YOU IDIOT! YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE DOING!
I ALWAYS KNOW WHAT I'M DOING. NOW STOP STRUGGLING. I'M NOT LOOKING FOR TROUBLE HERE.
TOO BAD.

TO BE CONTINUED IN SHE-HULK #31.

Scans by Zone